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| **Date of mailing** (day/month/year)<br>30 March 2000 (30.03.00) | |
| **International application No.**<br>PCT/GB99/02671 | **Applicant's or agent's file reference**<br>PLB/CC/Q418 |
| **International filing date** (day/month/year)<br>12 August 1999 (12.08.99) | **Priority date** (day/month/year)<br>20 August 1998 (20.08.98) |
| **Applicant**<br>ABDULHAYOGLU, Melih | |

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made:

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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 7 : G06F 1/00

A1

(11) International Publication Number: **WO 00/11536**

(43) International Publication Date: 2 March 2000 (02.03.00)

(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB99/02671

(22) International Filing Date: 12 August 1999 (12.08.99)

(30) Priority Data:
9818188.6 20 August 1998 (20.08.98) GB

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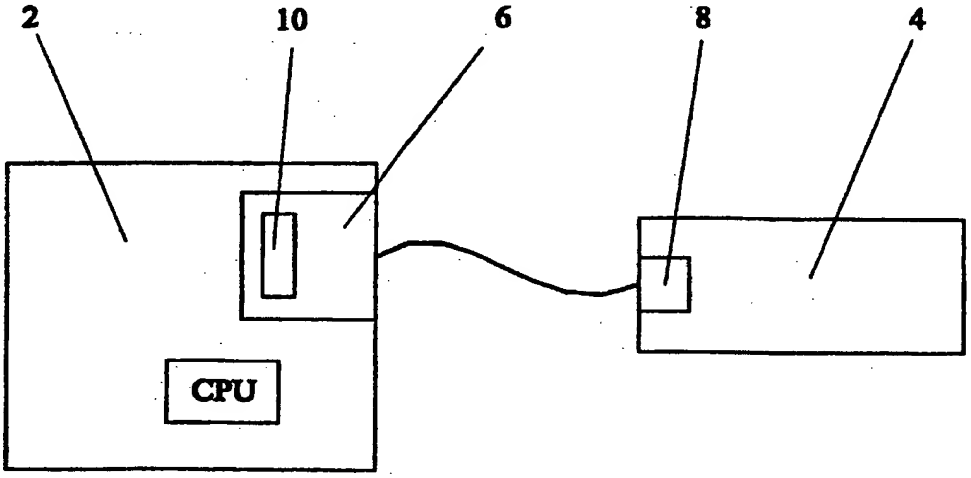
(81) Designated States: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SL, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

**Published**
*With international search report.*

(54) Title: IMPROVEMENTS IN AND RELATING TO ELECTRONIC SECURITY DEVICES




(57) Abstract

The present invention provides an electronic security device comprising means for receiving and outputting signals when in an authorised use state, a real time clock for determining whether a predetermined real time period has expired and, if so, seeking an authorisation, means for verifying the authorisation, and means for configuring the device into an unauthorised use state in the event that a correct authorisation is not received in time. A corresponding method and related devices are disclosed.

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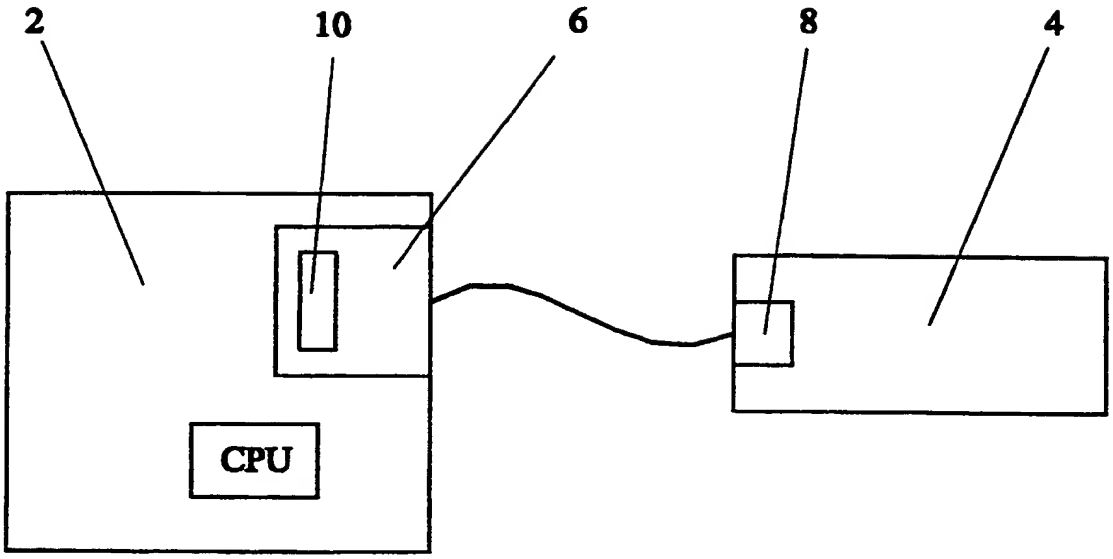


FIG. 1

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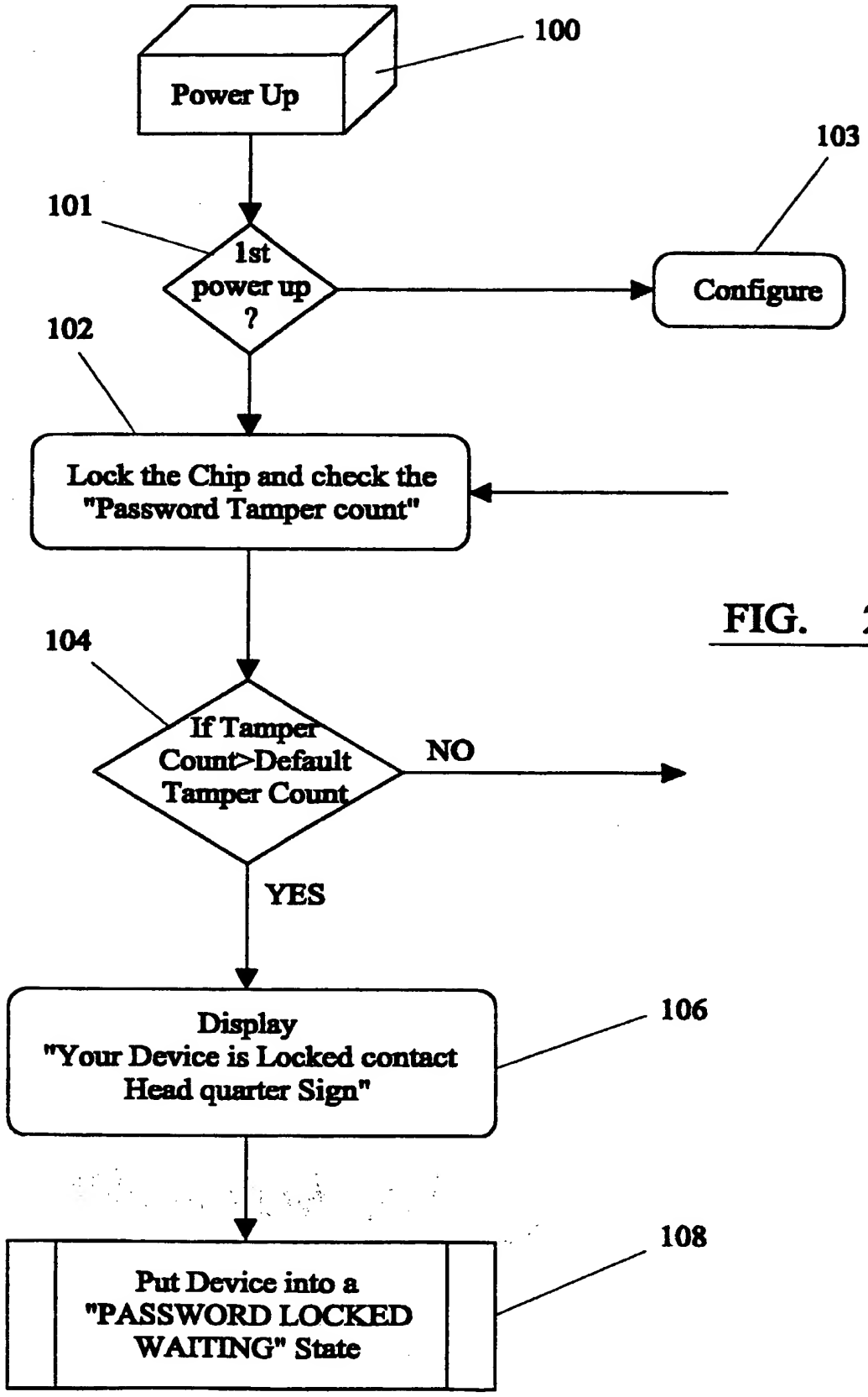
Power Up
100
103
101
1st power up ?
Configure
102
Lock the Chip and check the "Password Tamper count"
104
If Tamper Count>Default Tamper Count
NO
YES
Display "Your Device is Locked contact Head quarter Sign"
106
Put Device into a "PASSWORD LOCKED WAITING" State
108

FIG. 2A

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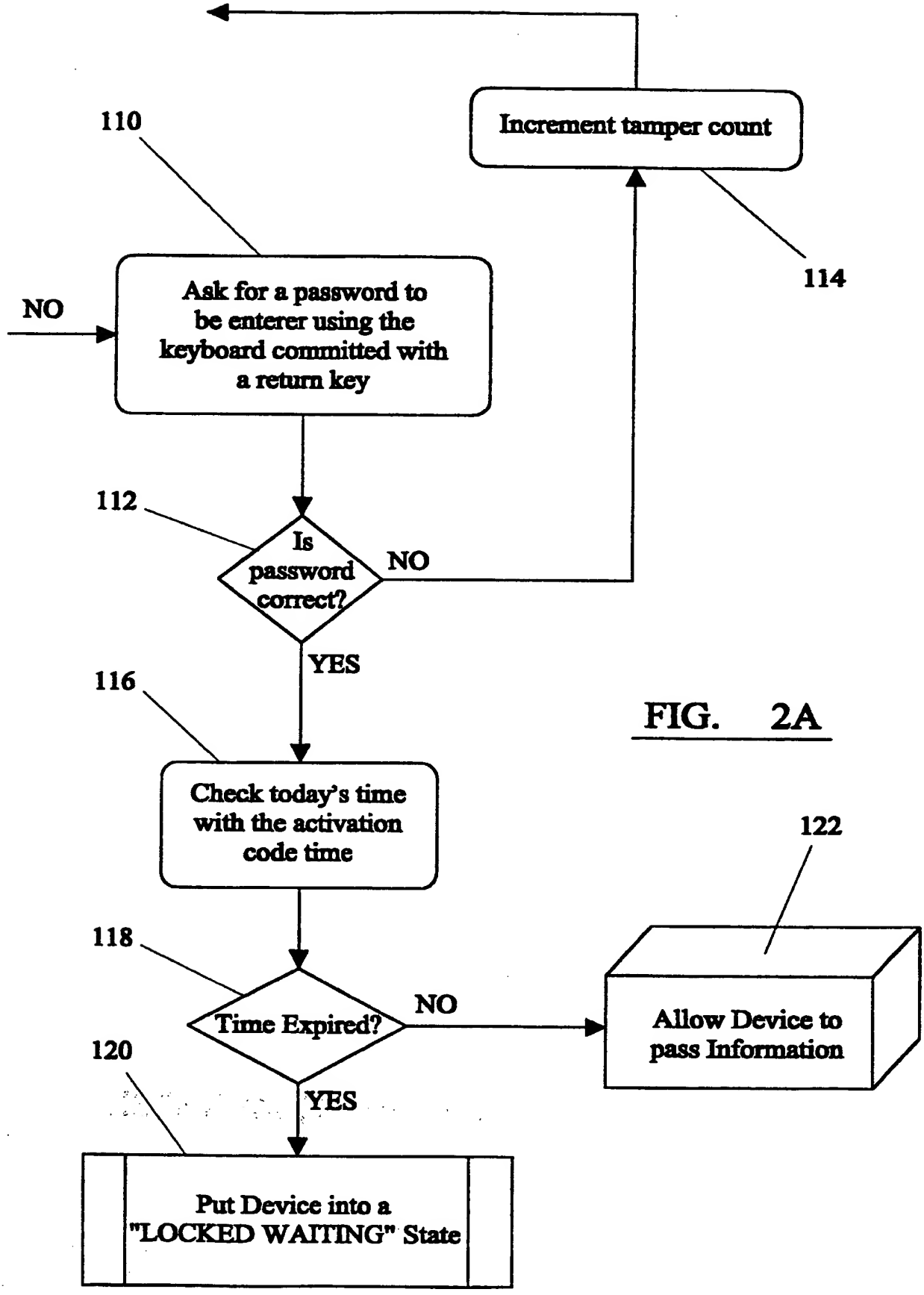
Increment tamper count
110
114
NO
Ask for a password to be enterer using the keyboard committed with a return key
112
Is password correct?
NO
YES
116
Check today's time with the activation code time
122
118
Time Expired?
NO
Allow Device to pass Information
120
YES
Put Device into a "LOCKED WAITING" State

FIG. 2A

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FIG. 2B

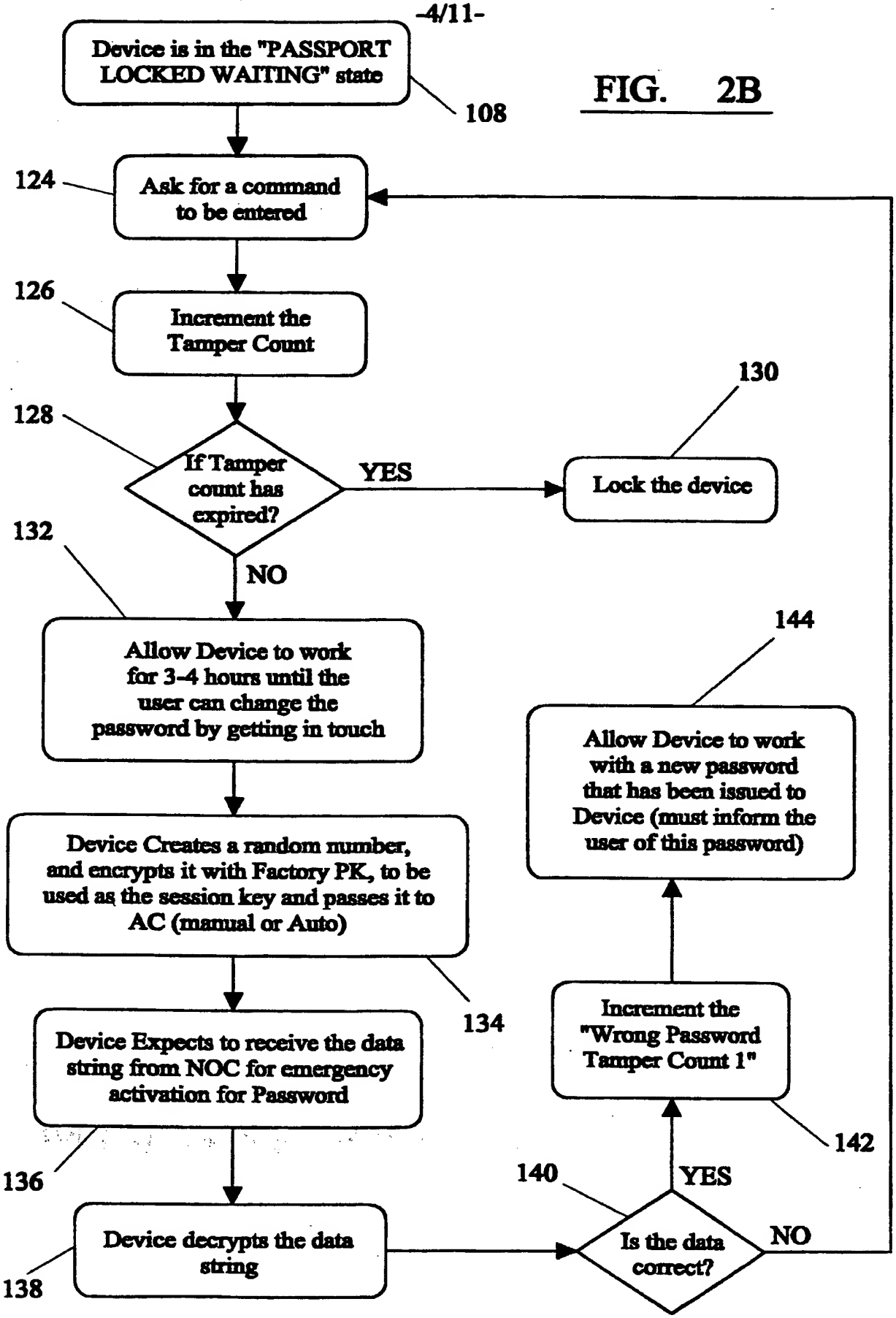
Device is in the "PASSPORT LOCKED WAITING" state
108
124
Ask for a command to be entered
126
Increment the Tamper Count
128
If Tamper count has expired?
YES
130
Lock the device
NO
132
Allow Device to work for 3-4 hours until the user can change the password by getting in touch
Device Creates a random number, and encrypts it with Factory PK, to be used as the session key and passes it to AC (manual or Auto)
134
Device Expects to receive the data string from NOC for emergency activation for Password
136
Device decrypts the data string
138
140
Is the data correct?
YES
NO
142
Increment the "Wrong Password Tamper Count 1"
144
Allow Device to work with a new password that has been issued to Device (must inform the user of this password)

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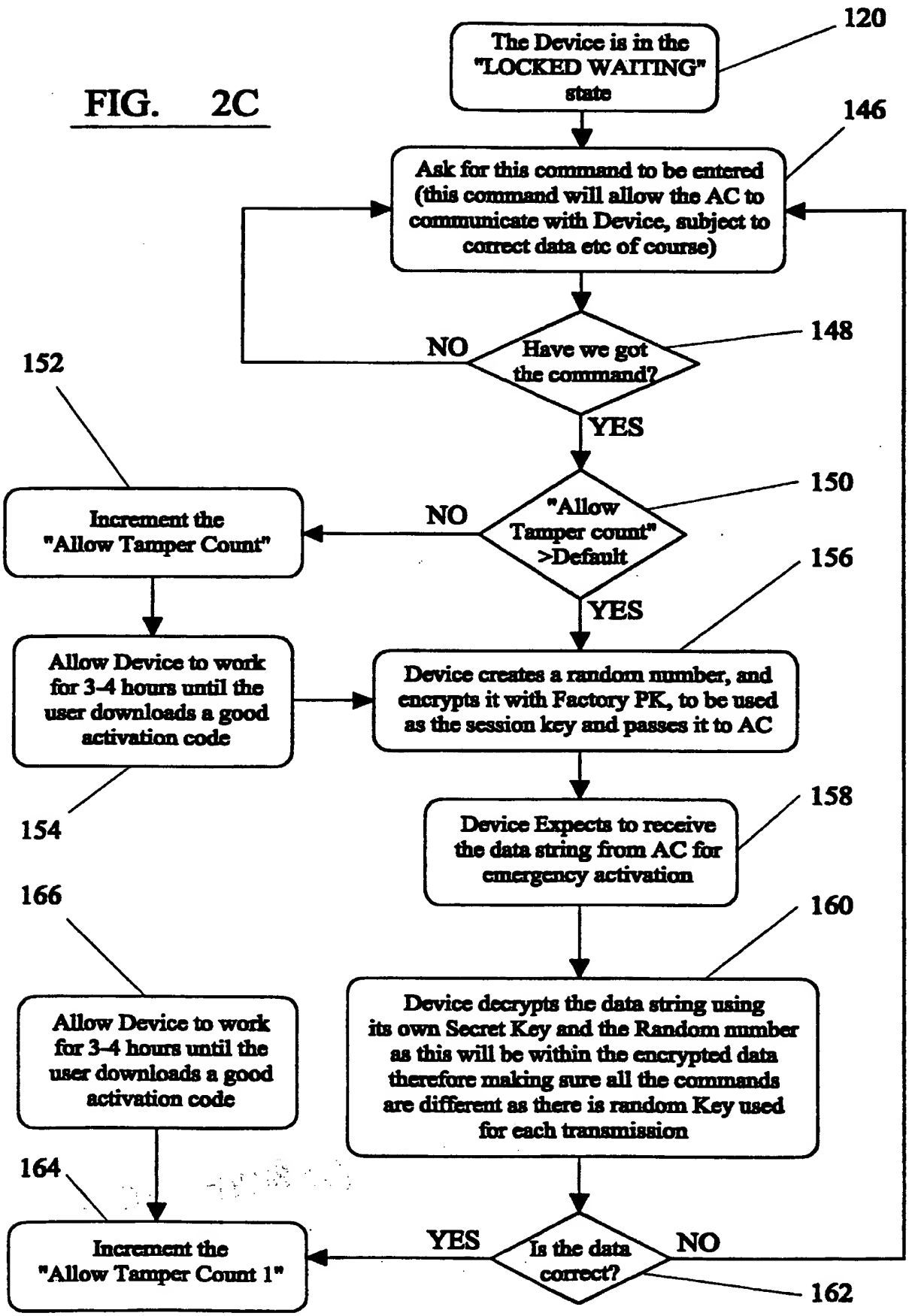
FIG. 2C


The Device is in the "LOCKED WAITING" state
120
Ask for this command to be entered (this command will allow the AC to communicate with Device, subject to correct data etc of course)
146
Have we got the command?
148
NO
YES
"Allow Tamper count" >Default
150
NO
YES
Increment the "Allow Tamper Count"
152
Allow Device to work for 3-4 hours until the user downloads a good activation code
154
Device creates a random number, and encrypts it with Factory PK, to be used as the session key and passes it to AC
156
Device Expects to receive the data string from AC for emergency activation
158
Device decrypts the data string using its own Secret Key and the Random number as this will be within the encrypted data therefore making sure all the commands are different as there is random Key used for each transmission
160
Is the data correct?
162
YES
NO
Increment the "Allow Tamper Count 1"
164
Allow Device to work for 3-4 hours until the user downloads a good activation code
166

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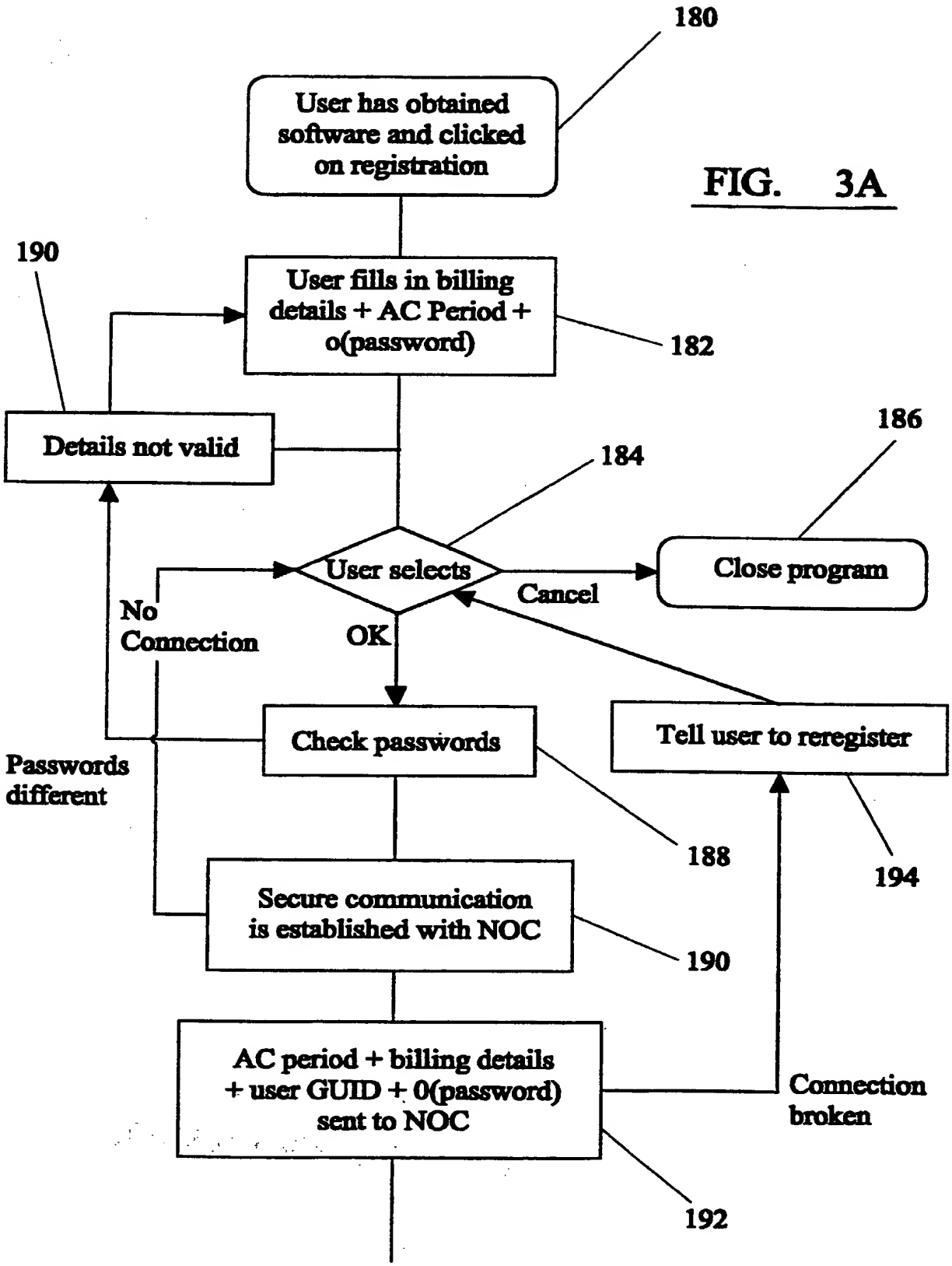
180
User has obtained software and clicked on registration
190
User fills in billing details + AC Period + o(password)
182
Details not valid
184
186
User selects
Close program
Cancel
No Connection
OK
Check passwords
Tell user to reregister
Passwords different
188
194
Secure communication is established with NOC
190
AC period + billing details + user GUID + 0(password) sent to NOC
Connection broken
192

FIG. 3A

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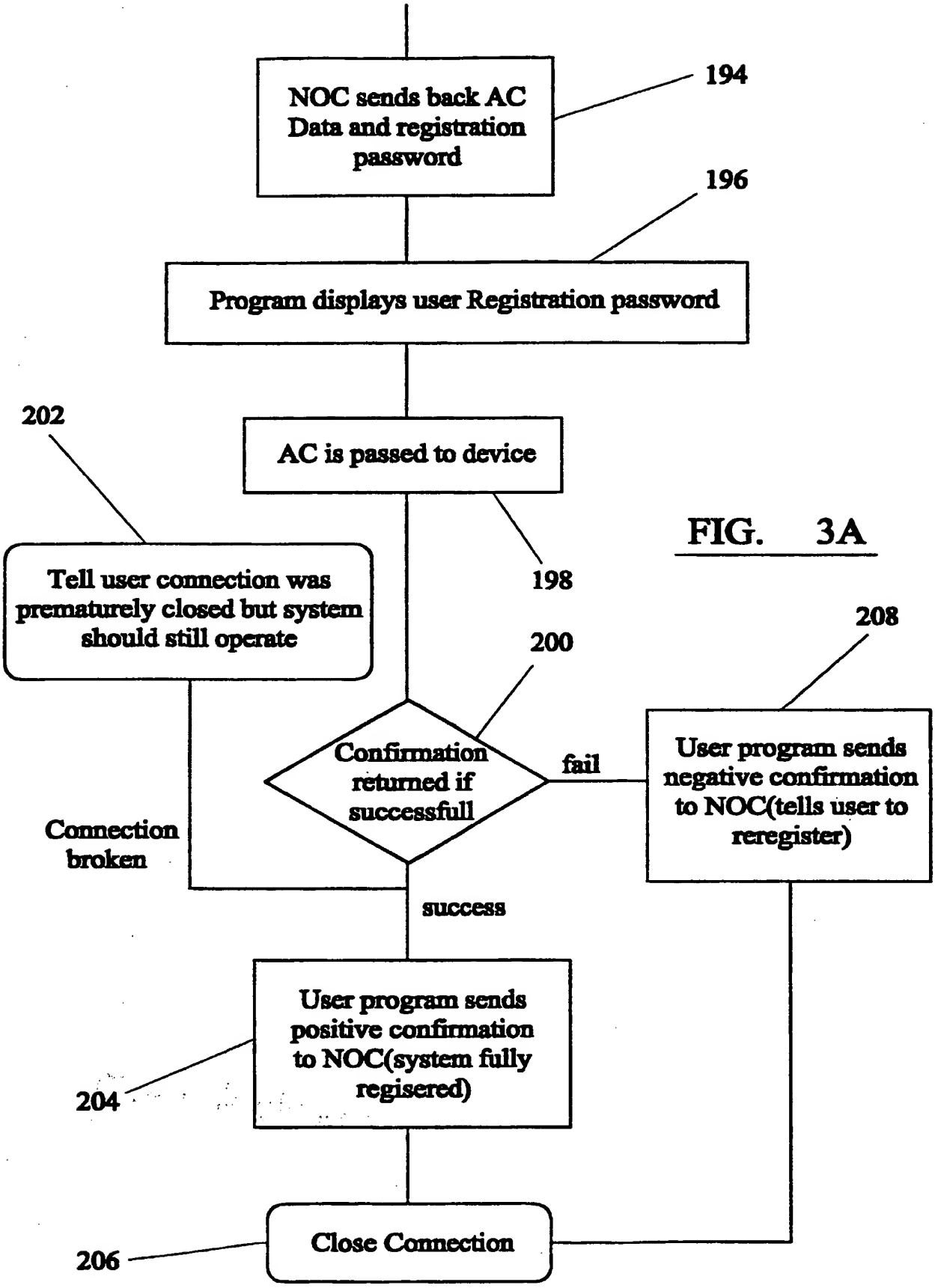
NOC sends back AC Data and registration password
194
196
Program displays user Registration password
202
AC is passed to device
198
Tell user connection was prematurely closed but system should still operate
200
208
Confirmation returned if successfull
fail
User program sends negative confirmation to NOC(tells user to reregister)
Connection broken
success
User program sends positive confirmation to NOC(system fully regisered)
204
Close Connection
206

FIG. 3A

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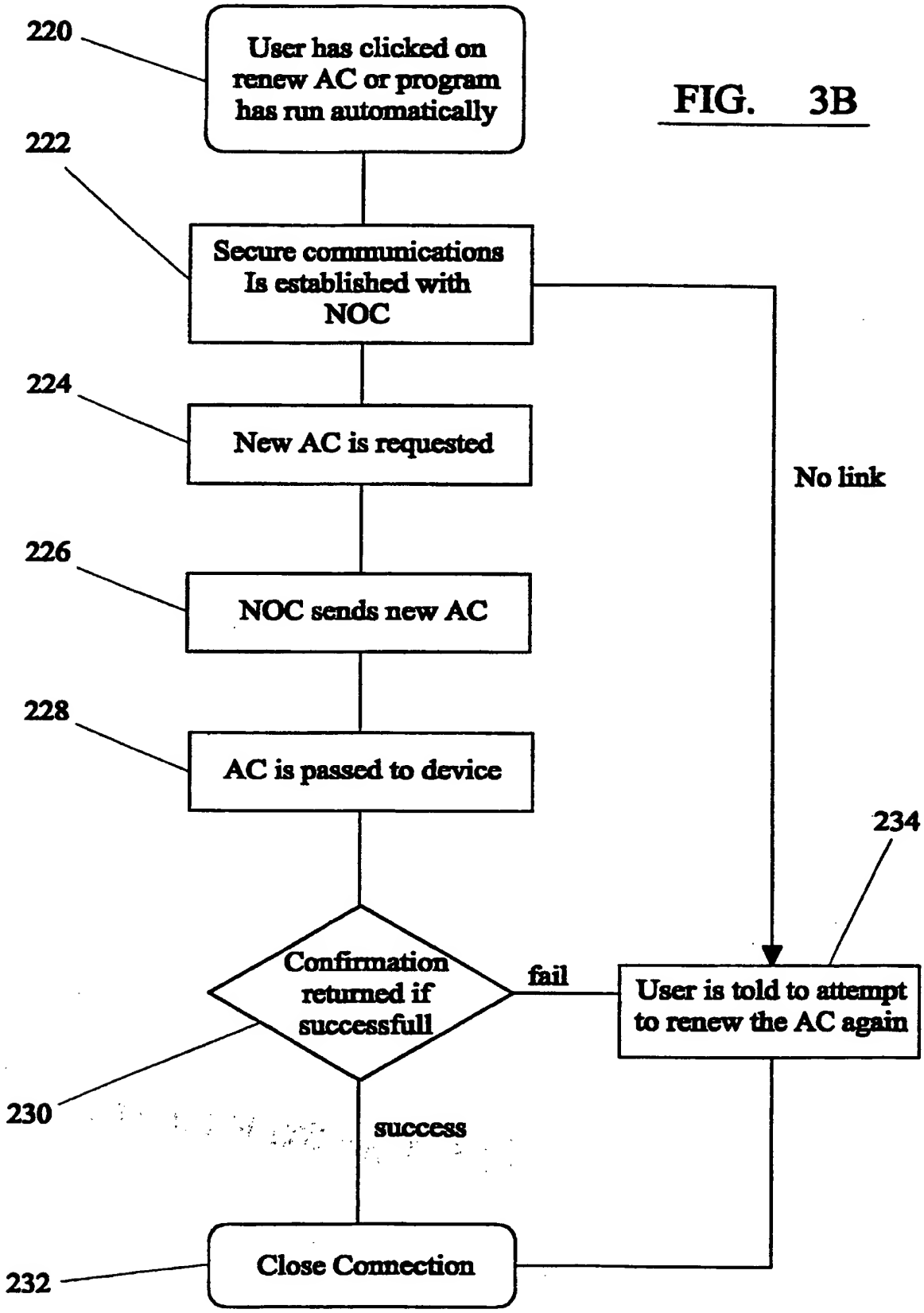
220
User has clicked on renew AC or program has run automatically
222
Secure communications Is established with NOC
224
New AC is requested
226
NOC sends new AC
228
AC is passed to device
Confirmation returned if successfull
fail
No link
234
User is told to attempt to renew the AC again
230
success
232
Close Connection

FIG. 3B

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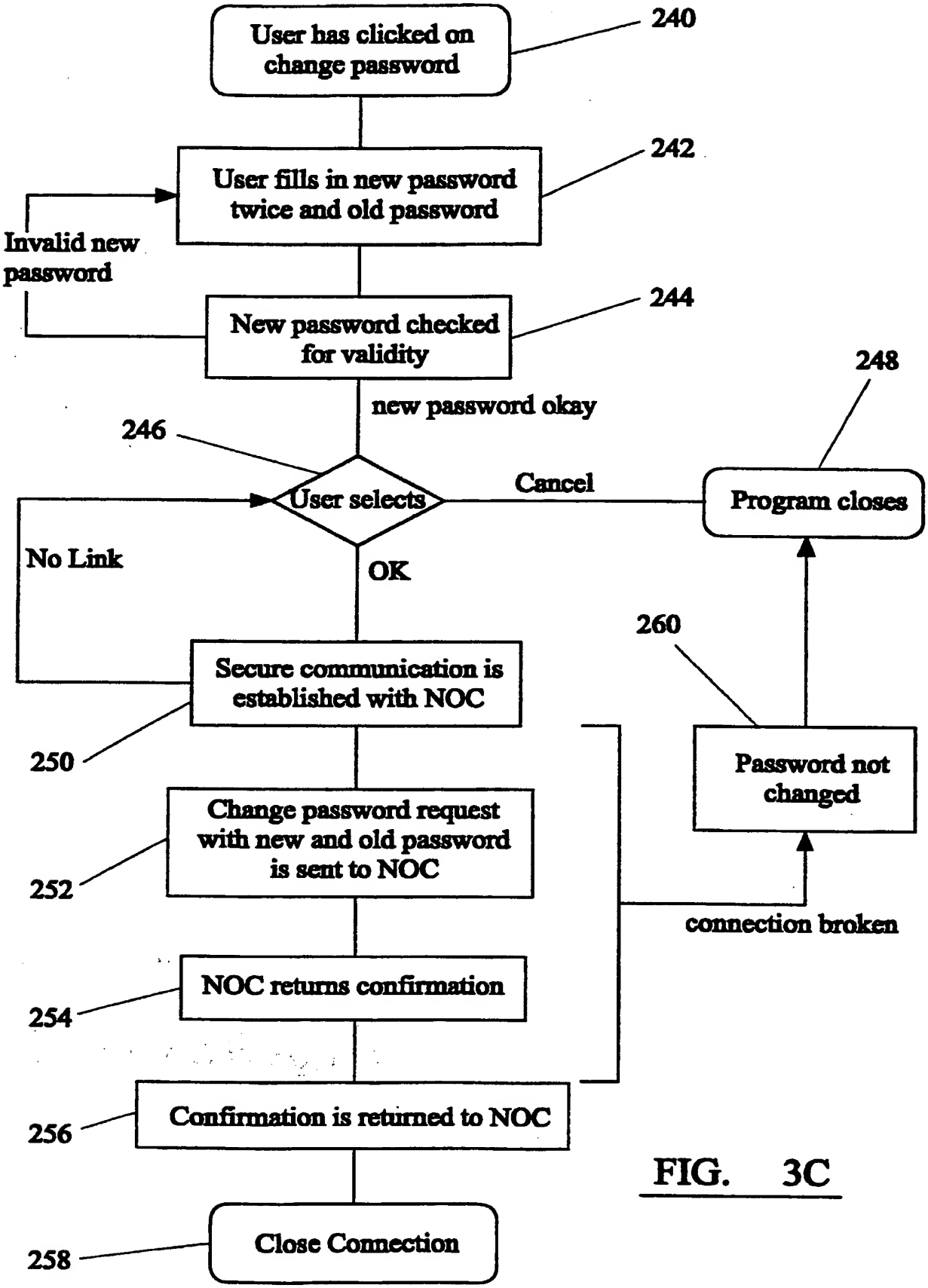
User has clicked on change password
240
User fills in new password twice and old password
242
Invalid new password
New password checked for validity
244
new password okay
246
User selects
Cancel
248
Program closes
No Link
OK
260
Secure communication is established with NOC
250
Password not changed
Change password request with new and old password is sent to NOC
252
connection broken
NOC returns confirmation
254
Confirmation is returned to NOC
256
Close Connection
258

FIG. 3C

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FIG. 3D

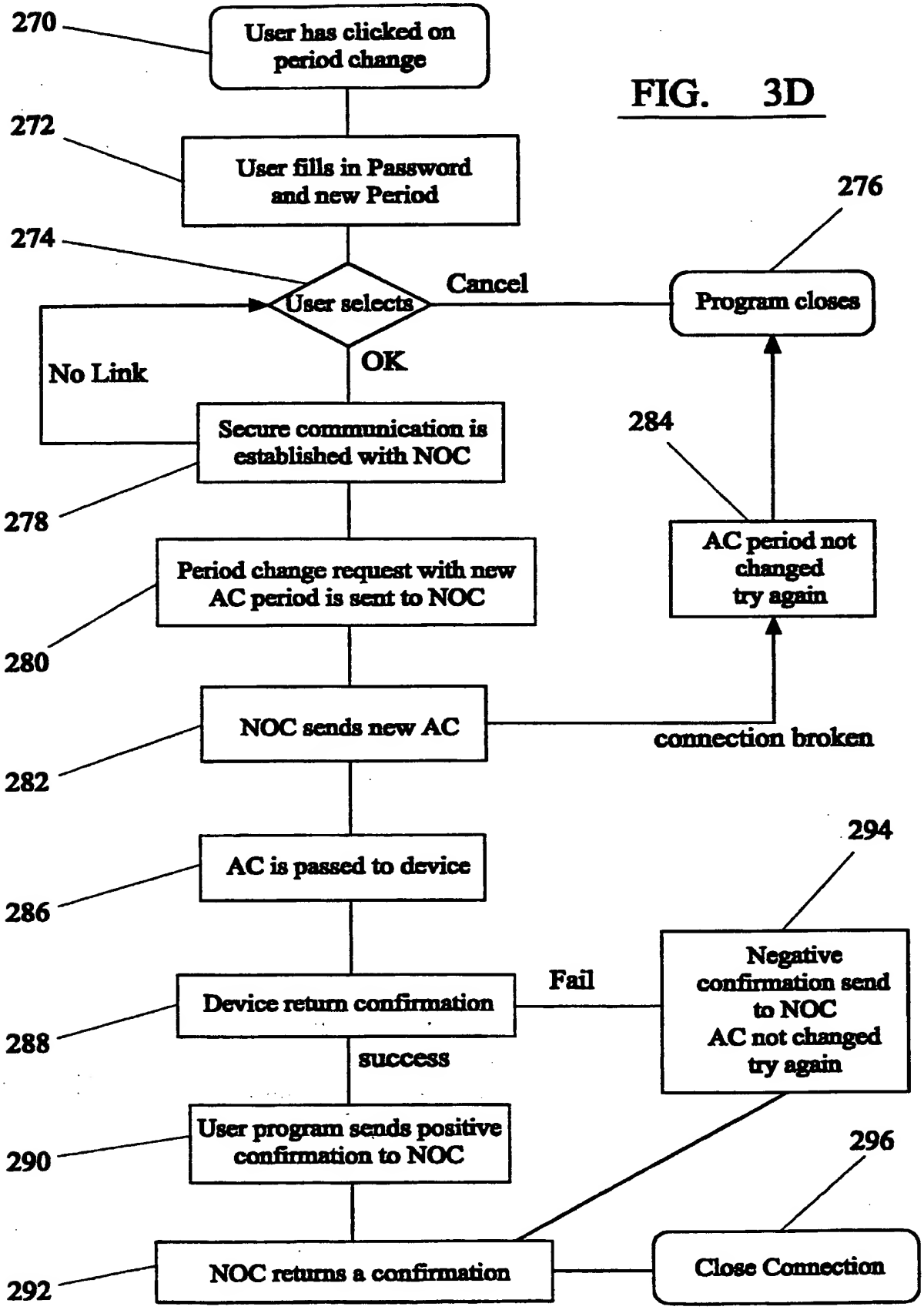
270
User has clicked on period change
272
User fills in Password and new Period
274
User selects
Cancel
276
Program closes
No Link
OK
Secure communication is established with NOC
278
284
AC period not changed try again
Period change request with new AC period is sent to NOC
280
NOC sends new AC
connection broken
282
AC is passed to device
286
294
Negative confirmation send to NOC AC not changed try again
Fail
Device return confirmation
288
success
User program sends positive confirmation to NOC
290
296
NOC returns a confirmation
Close Connection
292

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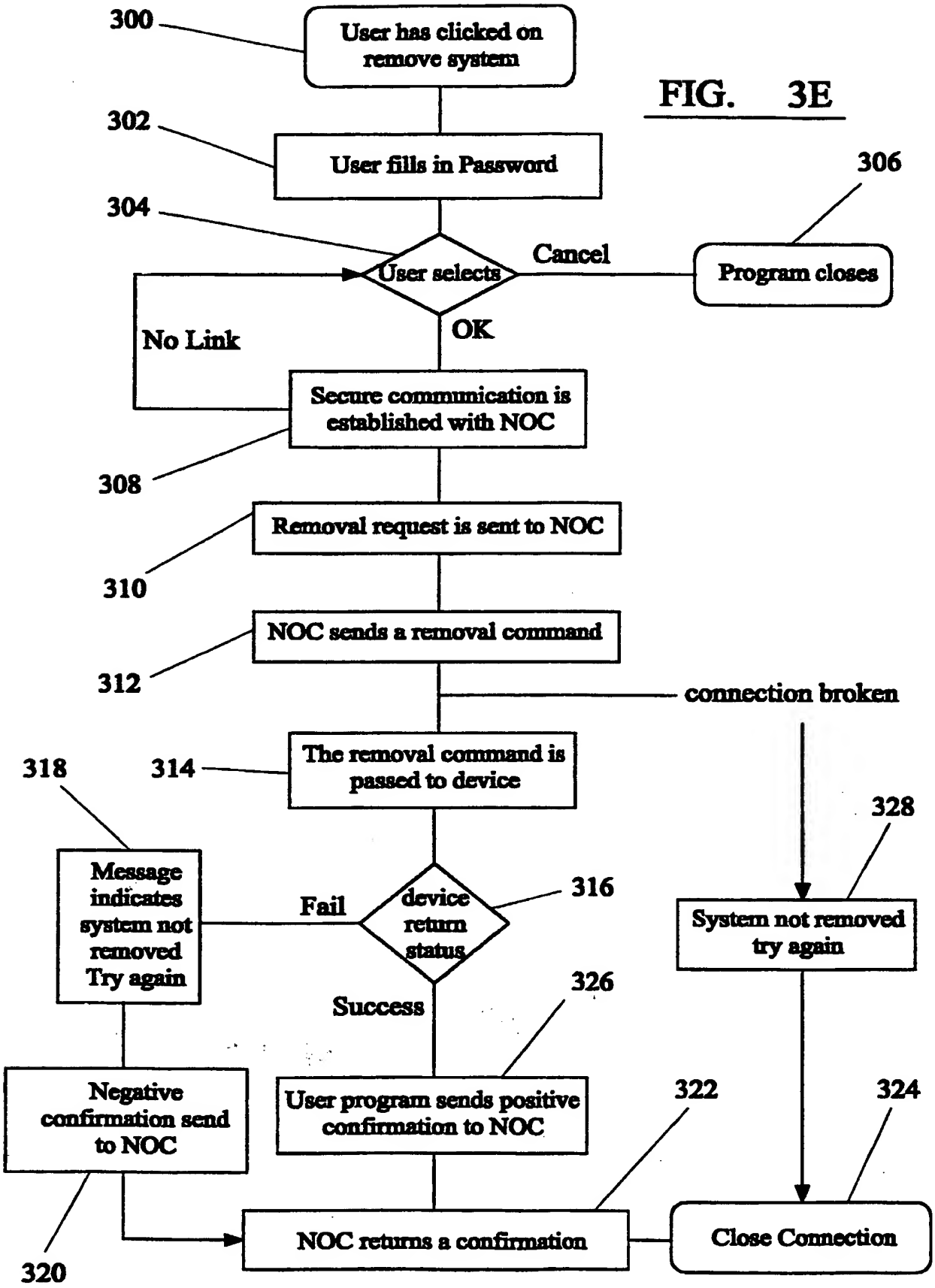
FIG. 3E


300
User has clicked on remove system
302
User fills in Password
304
306
User selects
Cancel
Program closes
No Link
OK
Secure communication is established with NOC
308
Removal request is sent to NOC
310
NOC sends a removal command
312
connection broken
The removal command is passed to device
314
318
328
Message indicates system not removed Try again
Fail
device return status
316
System not removed try again
Success
326
Negative confirmation send to NOC
User program sends positive confirmation to NOC
322
324
NOC returns a confirmation
Close Connection
320

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# IMPROVEMENTS IN AND RELATING TO ELECTRONIC SECURITY DEVICES

## Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to electronic security devices and to methods of operation of electronic devices.

## Background to the Invention

Despite the growing proliferation of computer hardware and software, there are still serious problems associated with the security of both of them. Many new problems have arisen and others have become exacerbated as computers have become progressively more portable. One such particular problem is the security of devices themselves against theft.

The present invention aims to provide in preferred embodiments thereof, electronic security devices that address at least some of the problems of the prior art.

## Summary of the Invention

According to the present invention in a first aspect, there is provided an electronic security device comprising means for receiving and outputting signals when in an authorised use state, a real time clock for determining whether a predetermined real time period has expired and, if so, seeking an authorisation, means for verifying the authorisation, and means for configuring the device into an unauthorised use state in the event that a correct authorisation is not received in time.

This device provides time-limited security based on a real time measure, not based on the last use of the device.

Suitably, the device is adapted to receive encrypted authorisation codes.

Suitably, when in an unauthorised use state the device received input signals, encrypts them and outputs the encrypted signals.

Suitably, the device comprises means whereby when in an unauthorised use state, the device reduces the frequency at which inputs are transmitted to an input receiver.

Suitably, the device includes means for generating a random (which expression includes pseudo-random) number and means for encrypting the random number. Suitably, the device includes means for performing a predetermined mathematical operation on the random number. Suitably, the device includes means for encrypting and decrypting data. Suitably, the encryption is according to a public key algorithm.

Suitably, the device additionally comprises a means for periodically checking the real time clock against a predetermined time period. Suitably, the periodic checking means comprises a counter which upon reaching a predetermined number initiates the check and means for re-setting the counter.

Suitably, the device comprises a dedicated power supply. Suitably, the device is embodied in a plug-in

module, which plug in module suitably comprises a power source such as a battery.

According to the present invention in a second aspect, there is provided an electronic apparatus comprising a security device according to the first aspect of the invention.

Suitably, the security device is located between an electronic output device and an electronic input device. The output device may, for instance, be a keyboard or a modem. The input device may be a central processing unit, memory unit, video card etc. Suitably, when in an unauthorised use state the device reduces the frequency at which key presses are transmitted to or within the electronic apparatus.

According to the present invention in a third aspect, there is provided a digital electronic computer comprising a security device according to the first aspect of the invention.

According to the present invention in a fourth aspect, there is provided a method of operating an electronic device comprising a security device which receives output signals when in an authorised use state, the method comprising the steps of using a real time clock to determine whether a predetermined real time period has expired and, if so, seeking an authorisation, checking whether the authorisation is acceptable and configuring the device in an unauthorised use state in the event that a correct authorisation is not received in time.

Suitably, the authorisation code is encrypted.

Suitably, when in an unauthorised use state the device receives input signals, encrypts them and outputs the encrypted signals.

Suitably, when in an unauthorised use state, the device reduces the frequency at which inputs are transmitted to an input receiver.

Suitably, the device generates a random (which expression includes pseudo-random) number and encrypts the random number. Suitably, the device performs a predetermined mathematical operation on the random number. Suitably, the device encrypts and decrypts data. Suitably, the encryption is according to a public key algorithm.

Suitably the encrypted number is transmitted to a verification station which verification station decrypts the encrypted number and verifies it against a number previously supplied to the electronic device.

According to the present invention in a fifth aspect, there is provided an electronic system adapted and configured to operate according to the method of the fourth aspect of the invention.

## Brief Description of the Figures

The present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the Figures that follow; in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic illustration of an electronic data processing apparatus embodying the present invention.

Figures 2A-2C are flow diagrams illustrating a mode of operation of the Figure 1 apparatus according to the present invention.

Figures 3A-3E are flow diagrams illustrating more detail of a mode of operation of the Figure 1 apparatus according to the present invention.

## Description of the Preferred Embodiments

In one preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided an electronic data processing apparatus, typically a personal computer ("PC") 2. The PC 2 receives input signals from peripheral input devices (eg keyboard, data socket (modem), pen, voice recognition microphone etc). The PC 2 includes a keyboard 4 having an associated keyboard controller 6 and a bus 8 forming an input channel.

A security device 10 is located between the keyboard controller 6 and the bus 8. The device is shown schematically in the control line, but normally it will be located elsewhere, for instance in the body of the PC 2 or keyboard itself. It needs to be in a vital location so that when inactive it renders the equipment it is in useless or at least incapacitates it to some extent. The security device 10 has the following characteristics.

(i) It includes a real-time clock powered by an internal power-supply.

(ii) It includes a fast and reversible (symmetric) encryption/decryption algorithm such as DES or T-code (in ROM - read only memory).

(iii) It has a slower but more secure (asymmetric) public key encryption/decryption algorithm having an associated public key (in ROM). Although referred to as a public key, it will not normally be disclosed.

(iv) It has a volatile memory Random Access Memory (RAM) including authorisation codes or an algorithm therefor, or pre-stored password and means for checking whether an input password or code matches such an authorisation code or password. The RAM is maintained by the power supply.

(v) It has the capacity to perform predetermined mathematical operations (eg in a Z80 processor).

The security device 10 is embodied in a silicon device including a microprocessor (eg a Z80), read only memory, random access memory and a power source such as a battery to provide constant power for the real-time clock. If the power source for the real-time clock is removed the security device 10 will become deactivated. At the manufacturing stage the security device 10 is provided with a unique serial number to differentiate it from other corresponding devices, for instance in ROM, EPROM etc.

Generally, the security device 10 is activated by an activation code. The activation code is provided to the security device 10 encoded using a public key algorithm for high security. If the activation code is not provided on demand the security device 10 will enter an unauthorised use state. The security device 10 is configured so that upon receipt of the correct activation code it is activated for authorised use for a period of time determined according to the activation code, according to the in-built real-time clock. The period of time can be varied based upon the activation code received. While activated, the security device 12 transmits received signals unaltered. When not activated it is in the unauthorised use state and encrypts signals passing therethrough or delays keyboard input strikes. Thus, while in the unauthorised use state the PC 2 cannot understand the output of keyboard 8.

When the predetermined period of operation expires, the security device 10 requests a further activation code for the next period. When requesting a further activation code, the security device 10 identifies itself. The activation code is requested by the user from a central database. The central database checks to determine if a further activation can be approved, for instance it may check to determine whether the device has been reported stolen, rental fees due have been paid etc. If further activation is authorised, the database encrypts the activation code for the next period using the particular security device's public key which is entered into the security device 10. The encrypted activation code normally is provided via electronic means directly to the security device 10, for instance directly by modem or over the internet, but can also be entered manually by the user, via

a disk or by local infra red transmitter. Upon receipt of the encrypted activation code, the security device 10 decrypts it and checks it against its pre-stored codes to determine the further predetermined period for which it is to be activated before requiring a further activation code.

Further security can be provided by an additional step of the security device 10 creating a random number which is encrypted according to the particular security devices public key. The encrypted random number is transmitted to the database centre (by whatever method). The database centre decrypts the random number, performs a predetermined mathematical calculation upon it (this could be as simple as to multiply by two or to XOR it with a key) and encrypts the new value with a public key provided (or its own public key) by the centre and sends it back to the security device 10. The security device upon receipt of the information, decrypts it using the relevant public key and compares the figures (after reversing the predetermined calculation or taking it into account). If the figures correspond then the security device 10 is confident it is dealing with the correct database centre and will accept reconfiguration instructions eg re-setting the real time clock.

If a correct activation code is not provided to the security device 10 on demand at the end of the predetermined period it enters an unauthorised use state in which the user is restricted to, say, 8 keystrokes per minute to input subsequent characters etc. Normally, the security device 10 will demand an activation code some time prior to the end of the predetermined period of operation so that any errors or administrative difficulties can be resolved before the enters its unauthorised use state.

The PC 2 may automatically seek an authorisation code, for instance via direct modem or internet access to an authorisation centre, without the user intervening.

Each PC 2 normally will only have one such security device 10, but each such device 10 manufactured has a different public key so each one is unique. Thus, generally each device 10 will output a different signal upon receipt of the same input signal.

The device also provides password verification and can be configured to do this with or without the activation code.

In use, the PC 2 is configured to require a password before permitting access to certain functions or data. By way of example, a word-processing file may be password protected. Before permitting access to the file, the PC Central Processing Unit (CPU) requires confirmation from the security device 10 that the correct password has been entered.

Referring to Figures 2A-2C of the drawings that follow, there is shown in flow diagrams an overview of the operation of the present invention. The flow diagrams show a system configured to require correct password input for operation from power up and when a predetermined time period expires.

Referring now to Figure 2A, from power up 100 the security device 10 checks (101) a flag to determine whether it is its first power up in which case a configuration set-

up is initiated (103). In CONFIGURATION the device is allocated its unique public key and the real-time clock is initialised. Other features such as its predetermined mathematical operation, codes for certain time periods, etc can be configured or modified at this time. The user does not know these. When configuration is finished or following the "password tamper count" is checked 102. At 104 if the tamper count is greater than the default tamper count a "LOCKED" message is displayed 106 and the security device 10 is configured into a "PASSWORD LOCKED WAITING" state (see Figure 2B) at 108.

If at 104 the tamper count is less than or equal to the default tamper count a password is requested 110. If at 112 the password is incorrect the tamper count is incremented by one 114. If the password is correct the security device 10 compares the current real time with the time against which activation has been permitted 116. The security device 10 also compares the current real time from its own internal clock/counter with the time for which authorised use has been permitted each time the PC 2 is booked (i.e. typically each time WINDOWS (Registered Trade Mark) is initialised. If at 118 the time has expired, the security device is configured into the "LOCKED WAITING" state 120 (see Figure 2C) but if the time has not expired the information is passed without interruption (122).

Referring to Figure 2B, the "PASSWORD LOCKED WAITING" state is now described. In the "PASSWORD LOCKED WAITING" state a keystroke delay facility is enabled. The keystroke delay facility only allows one keystroke every eight seconds to reach the PC 2. This ensures that inputs needed during boot up, or to enter a password are permitted and

predictable, but that the device cannot be used practicably.

In the "PASSWORD LOCKED WAITING" state 108, at 124 the user is required to input a command instructing the PC to communicate with an authorisation centre. At this stage the user can choose manual or automatic communication with the authorisation centre. When the command is entered, the tamper count is incremented (126). If (128) the tamper count has expired the device is locked (130). If the tamper count has not expired, the device is allowed (132) to operate for a further 3-4 hours to enable the verification procedure to be completed.

The security device first creates and encrypts a random (or pseudo-random) number and encrypts it with the embedded public key (134). In 134 "PK" = Public Key and "AC" = Activation Code. The encrypted random number is transmitted to the authorisation centre which may be automatic, for instance via a direct modem or the internet, or manually, for instance by the user phoning up the authorisation centre and entering what they are told via the keyboard. If the user communicates manually, further security can be implemented such as checking the users pre-allocated password etc.

The security device 10 then at 136 enters a waiting state to receive a data string (138) from the network authorisation centre ("NOC") which its decrypts. If the received data is verified (140) the "wrong password tamper count" is incremented (142) and the device is permitted to operate for a further period with a new password that is notified to the user (144). The input from the

authorisation centre includes an activation code and a new password encrypted according to the public key of the security device 10. If at 140 there is an error, indicating perhaps an attempted tampering with the device, it returns to the "PASSWORD LOCKED WAITING" state and asks for a command to be entered.

The authorisation centre will only provide the security device 10 with the necessary authorisation code and new password if approved. Approval may depend upon payment of relevant fees to the authorisation centre, checking whether the item of equipment is registered as stolen, or other security checks.

Referring to Figure 2C the security device 10 is in the "LOCKED WAITING" state 120. As this state is indicative of a possible security breach, a higher level of security is adopted.

At 146 the security device 10 requires a command to be entered instructing it to communicate with the authorisation centre via modem (for instance). Upon receipt of the command 148, the tamper count is checked 150. If the tamper count is less than or equal to the DEFAULT valve the ALLOW TAMPER COUNT counter is incremented 152 and the device is authorised 154 to operate for 3-4 hours from then until the user downloads an acceptable activation code. Next, or if at 150 the ALLOW TAMPER COUNT is greater than the default value, at 156 the security device 10 creates a random (or pseudo-random) number which is encrypted using its public key. The encrypted random number is transmitted to the authorisation centre together with an identifier of the security device 10 in question.

The security device 10 then enters 158 a waiting state during which it expects to receive a data string from the authorisation centre for activation. The authorisation centre first checks whether the security device 10 can be authorised for a further period, for instance by checking whether it has been reported stolen or if any monies due are outstanding. If further use can be authorised, the authorisation centre (knowing the public key of the security device 10) decrypts the encrypted random number, performs a predetermined mathematical operation upon it (eg XOR or multiply), re-encrypts the result using the same public key and transmits the encrypted result with an encrypted new authorisation code to the security device 10 as a data string.

Upon receipt 160 of the encrypted data string, the random number is checked 162 (since the security device 10 knows the predetermined mathematical operation undertaken by the authorisation centre) and if verified the ALLOW TAMPER COUNT is incremented by one 164 and the device is authorised (166) for a further 3-4 hours until the user downloads a good activation code.

If the data is incorrect, a communication command is requested 146 once again.

Once in normal operation the device 10 uses a counter to count up to a predetermined value at which point the real-time clock is checked against its memory for authorisation of a further period. After each check the counter is re-set and counts again. Thus, the real-time clock is checked periodically against the permitted time of

operation to determine if further authorisation is required.

Referring to Figure 3A, once the user has obtained the software package and it has been installed, on screen he or she is invited to register. Having opted to "Register" (180) the security device 10 transmits its identification number to the NOC. The user then (182) fills in their billing details, activation code period and, optionally, their password. At 184 the user is asked to verify their selection by selecting either "OK" or "CANCEL". If "CANCEL" is selected then the program is closed (186). If "OK" is selected the password (if any) is checked (188) with a pre-stored password. If the password is different (190) the system returns to 182. If the password is accepted, secure communication is established with the NOC. If secure communication cannot be established, a message can be displayed to this effect and the system returns to (184). The activation code period, billing details, user Global Unique Identifier ("GUID") and, if used, password are sent to NOC at 192. If for any reason the connection is broken, at 194 the user is informed of this and told to re-register at 184.

Upon receipt of the details from 192 the NOC sends back activation code data and a registration password. The password must be stored safely in case the machine is stolen. The program then displays the user registration password (196) received from the NOC. At 198 the activation code is passed to the security device 10 which check the activation code at 200. If for any reason the connection is broken then at 202 the user is informed that the connection was prematurely closed, but that the system

should still operate. If a confirmation of success is indicated, the user program sends positive confirmation to the NOC for a fully registered system (204) and the connection is closed (206). If the device indicates a fail on the activation code the user program sends a negative confirmation to the NOC which tells the user to re-register (208).

Referring now to Figure 3B, a flow diagram illustrating renewal of an activation code is shown.

At 220 the renewal is initiated either by a user clicking on a "RENEW AC" button or the program running automatically. At 222 a secure communication is established with the NOC. At 224 a new AC is requested which at 226 is sent by the NOC. The new AC is sent to the security device 10 at 228 and if successful (230) confirms this to the NOC and closes the connection (232). If unsuccessful the user is told to attempt to renew the AC again (234) and the connection is closed (232).

If no link can be established with the NOC at 222, the user is told to attempt to renew the activation code again at some future time (234) and the attempted connection is closed (232).

Referring now to Figure 3C, there is shown a flow diagram illustrating the capability of the system to change a password.

At 240 the user clicking on an appropriate "button" initiates the change of password. The user then (242) fills in the new password twice (for validation) and the

old password to ensure they are an authorised user. The two new passwords are compared and if not identical are regarded as invalid at 244, so the system returns to 242. If the two new passwords are the same, at 246 the user is invited to verify their selection by choosing either "OK" or "CANCEL". If the user selects "CANCEL" then the program closes at 248. If the user selects "OK", a secure communication link is established with the NOC at 250. If no link can be established then the system returns to 246. At 252 the change password request with the new and old password is sent to the NOC which at 254 returns confirmation to the device 10. Upon receipt of confirmation, at 256 the device re-confirms receipt at 256 and the connection is closed (258). If for any reason the connection between the device 10 and NOC is broken, the password is not changed (260) and the program closes.

Referring now to Figure 3D, there is a flow diagram showing how a user can change their activation code period.

Once the user clicks to indicate they wish a period change at 270, they are required to fill in their password (if one is used) and the new period required at 272. The user is then invited to verify their choice by selecting either "OK" or "CANCEL" at 274. If "CANCEL" is selected the program closes at 276. If "OK" is selected a secure communication link is established with the NOC at 278. If no link can be established, the system returns to 274.

Upon a secure communication being established (278) the period change request with new activation code period is sent to the NOC at 280. The NOC then at 282 sends the new activation code back. If for any reason the connection is

broken the activation code period is not changed and a try again signal is given at 284. The program then closes (276). Upon receipt of the new activation code, it is passed to the security device 10 at 286. The security device 10 then checks the activation code. If acceptable (success) the user program then sends a positive confirmation to the NOC at 290 and the NOC returns a confirmation at 292. If at 288 the device returns a fail message, negative confirmation is sent to the NOC, the activation code is not changed and a try again signal is given (294). After the NOC returns a confirmation, the connection is closed at 296.

Referring now to Figure 3E, a flow diagram is shown illustrating how the system can be removed, starting from a remove system button at 300.

The user first fills in their password at (302) following which they are requested to verify their choice by selecting either "OK" or "CANCEL" (304). If "CANCEL" is selected the program closes (306). If "OK" is selected, a secure communication link is established with NOC (308). If no link can be established, the system returns to (304). Upon a secure link being established, the removal request is sent to NOC (310) following which the NOC (312) sends a removal command to the device 10. The removal command is passed to the device (10) at 314 which is then checked at 316 for validity. If the validity check is failed a message is given indicating that the system has not been removed and inviting the user to try again (318) and a negative confirmation is sent to NOC (320) following which the NOC returns a confirmation (322) and the connection is closed (324). If the validity check indicates a success,

the user program sends confirmation to the NOC (326), the NOC returns a confirmation at (322) and the connection is closed at (324). If for any reason the connection with the NOC is broken, a message is displayed indicating that the system has not been removed and inviting the user to try again (328) and the connection is closed (324).

Further embodiments of the present invention provide the security device 12 before a hard disk or other memory device in a PC architecture.

In this mode, the device encrypts signals input to the hard disk or other memory device and decrypts signals output from the same. This makes theft of data from the hard disk or other memory device harder, especially when the mode is combined with the feature described below. We refer to this as Auto-Encrypt On Demand Decrypt (AEODD).

The device can be placed before any essential integer of the PC, such as the hard disk, the CPU, the video card etc and configured so that it will only operate upon periodic receipt of an authorisation code. When correctly activated the device onwards transmits received signals. If in an unauthorised use state it can block received signals. Alternatively, in the case of a memory device, encryption and decryption can be provided.

In each case, the provision of the device means that unless it is correctly activated the PC cannot properly be used. For instance, in the case of the hard disk option, everything that is written to the hard disk is encrypted (providing additional security to the data on the disk) using the fast encryption algorithm and everything read

from it is decrypted by the device. The decryption only occurs if the device is activated in an authorised use state so if the PC is stolen, then when the permitted time period expires no further authorisation can be obtained (with the assumption that the PC has been reported as stolen), so in effect it will become inoperative. Since activation relies on the public key encryption code, it is relatively secure. Equally, if the device precedes the CPU or video card, if it becomes deactivated, the PC is inoperative.

In its unauthorised use state the security device can be configured so that it no longer transmits signals, but the present invention is not limited to this alternative. Unauthorised use can also be deterred, for instance, by configuring the device to output a useless signal, for instance an encrypted version of the input signal.

Although reference is made herein to a "password", that can comprise any signal or combination of signals and need not be a "word" at all.

It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the device can be located in other positions or, preferably, incorporated integrally within an essential element of the PC.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention a microprocessor security device is provided with a real-time clock on a PC motherboard at a vital point, such as prior to the CPU, the video card, the hard disk etc. When correctly activated for authorised use, the device receives and outputs received signals. The device remains activated

for a predetermined period of time. Upon or just prior to expiry of the predetermined period, the device seeks an authorisation code that can be input to it in any of the known ways. If a correct authorisation code is not entered, the device is set to an unauthorised use state and no longer properly outputs received signals. Thus a periodic authorisation code is required to keep the security device, and hence the PC, operational.

In preferred embodiments, the authorisation code is provided in encrypted form and, if desired, a further authentication step can be carried out.

The invention is applicable to any electronic apparatus. Although the present invention is described in relation to a PC, it will be appreciated that in relation to the periodic activation code feature it can find application in any electronic apparatus, for instance a video camera, lap top computer, mobile telephone etc.

The reader's attention is directed to all papers and documents which are filed concurrently with or previous to this specification in connection with this application and which are open to public inspection with this specification, and the contents of all such papers and documents are incorporated herein by reference.

All of the features disclosed in this specification (including any accompanying claims, abstract and drawings), and/or all of the steps of any method or process so disclosed, may be combined in any combination, except combinations where at least some of such features and/or steps are mutually exclusive.

Each feature disclosed in this specification (including any accompanying claims, abstract and drawings), may be replaced by alternative features serving the same, equivalent or similar purpose, unless expressly stated otherwise. Thus, unless expressly stated otherwise, each feature disclosed is one example only of a generic series of equivalent or similar features.

The invention is not restricted to the details of the foregoing embodiment(s). The invention extends to any novel one, or any novel combination, of the features disclosed in this specification (including any accompanying claims, abstract and drawings), or to any novel one, or any novel combination, of the steps of any method or process so disclosed.

Claims

1. An electronic security device comprising means for receiving and outputting signals when in an authorised use state, a real time clock for determining whether a predetermined real time period has expired and, if so, seeking an authorisation, means for verifying the authorisation, and means for configuring the device into an unauthorised use state in the event that a correct authorisation is not received in time.

2. An electronic device according to claim 1, in which the device is adapted to receive encrypted authorisation codes.

3. An electronic device according to claim 1 or claim 2, in which when in an unauthorised use state the device received input signals, encrypts them and outputs the encrypted signals.

4. An electronic device according to claim 1 or claim 2, in which the device comprises means whereby when in an unauthorised use state, the device reduces the frequency at which inputs are transmitted to an input receiver.

5. An electronic device according to any preceding claim, in which the device includes means for generating a random (which expression includes pseudo-random) number and means for encrypting the random number.

6. An electronic device according to claim 5, in which the device includes means for performing a predetermined mathematical operation on the random number.

7. An electronic device according to claim 5 or claim 6, in which the device includes means for encrypting and decrypting data.

8. An electronic device according to claim 7, in which the encryption is according to a public key algorithm.

9. An electronic device according to any preceding claim, in which the device additionally comprises a means for periodically checking the real time clock against a predetermined time period.

10. An electronic device according to claim 9, in which the periodic checking means comprises a counter which upon reaching a predetermined number initiates the check and means for re-setting the counter.

11. An electronic device according to any preceding claim, in which the device comprises a dedicated power supply.

12. An electronic device according to claim 11, in which the device is embodied in a plug-in module, which plug in module suitably comprises a power source such as a battery.

13. An electronic apparatus comprising a security device according to any one of claims 1 to 12.

14.An electronic apparatus according to claim 13, in which the security device is located between an electronic output device and an electronic input device.

15. An electronic apparatus according to claim 14, in which when in an unauthorised use state the device reduces the frequency at which key presses are transmitted to or within the electronic apparatus.

16. A digital electronic computer comprising a security device according to any one of claims 1 to 12.

17. A method of operating an electronic device comprising a security device which receives output signals when in an authorised use state, the method comprising the steps of using a real time clock to determine whether a predetermined real time period has expired and, if so, seeking an authorisation, checking whether the authorisation is acceptable and configuring the device in an unauthorised use state in the event that a correct authorisation is not received in time.

18. A method according to claim 17, in which the authorisation code is encrypted.

19. A method according to claim 17 or claim 18, in which when in an unauthorised use state the device receives input signals, encrypts them and outputs the encrypted signals.

20. A method according to claim 17 or claim 18, in which when in an unauthorised use state, the device reduces the frequency at which inputs are transmitted to an input receiver.

21. A method according to any one of claims 17 to 20, in which the device generates a random (which expression

includes pseudo-random) number and encrypts the random number.

22. A method according to claim 21, in which the device performs a predetermined mathematical operation on the random number.

23. A method according to claim 21 or claim 22, in which the device encrypts and decrypts data.

24. A method according to claim 23, in which the encryption is according to a public key algorithm.

25. A method according to claim 23 or claim 24, in which the encrypted number is transmitted to a verification station which verification station decrypts the encrypted number and verifies it against a number previously supplied to the electronic device.

25. An electronic system adapted and configured to operate according to any one of claims 17 to 25.

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter nal Application No
PCT/GB 99/02671

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 G06F1/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 G06F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category ° | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|---|---|---|
| X | DE 195 49 014 C (SIEMENS AG)<br>20 February 1997 (1997-02-20)<br><br>abstract; figure 1<br>claims 1-10 | 1-3,13,<br>14,<br>17-19,26 |
| A | --- | 9,12 |
| A | EP 0 649 080 A (SIEMENS NIXDORF INF SYST)<br>19 April 1995 (1995-04-19)<br><br>the whole document | 1-3,5-7,<br>11-14,<br>16-19,<br>21-23,<br>25,26 |
| | --- | |
| | -/-- | |

[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

[X] Patent family members are listed in annex.

° Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

| Date of the actual completion of the international search | Date of mailing of the international search report |
|---|---|
| 29 November 1999 | 06/12/1999 |

| Name and mailing address of the ISA | Authorized officer |
|---|---|
| European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2<br>NL – 2280 HV Rijswijk<br>Tel. (+31–70) 340–2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,<br>Fax: (+31–70) 340–3016 | Powell, D |

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1992)

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internat al Application No
PCT/GB 99/02671

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category ° | Citation of document, with indication,where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|---|---|---|
| A | US 4 882 752 A (LINDMAN RICHARD S ET AL)<br>21 November 1989 (1989-11-21)<br><br>abstract; figures 1,2,5<br>column 1, line 1 -column 7, line 31 | 1-3,5-7,<br>11-14,<br>16-19,<br>21-23,<br>25,26 |
| A | US 5 355 414 A (HALE ROBERT P ET AL)<br>11 October 1994 (1994-10-11) | |
| A | US 5 189 700 A (BLANDFORD ROBERT R)<br>23 February 1993 (1993-02-23) | |

Form PCT/ISA/210 (continuation of second sheet) (July 1992)

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Interr nal Application No
PCT/GB 99/02671

| Patent document cited in search report | Publication date | Patent family member(s) | Publication date |
|---|---|---|---|
| DE 19549014 C | 20-02-1997 | CN 1158523 A | 03-09-1997 |
| | | EP 0782350 A | 02-07-1997 |
| | | US 5864624 A | 26-01-1999 |
| EP 0649080 A | 19-04-1995 | NONE | |
| US 4882752 A | 21-11-1989 | NONE | |
| US 5355414 A | 11-10-1994 | NONE | |
| US 5189700 A | 23-02-1993 | US 5347579 A | 13-09-1994 |
| | | WO 9212485 A | 23-07-1992 |

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# PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

RECD 05 DEC 2000
PCT

# PCT

## INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

| Applicant's or agent's file reference | FOR FURTHER ACTION | See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416) |
|---|---|---|
| PLB/JE/Q418 | | |
| International application No. | International filing date *(day/month/year)* | Priority date *(day/month/year)* |
| PCT/GB99/02671 | 12/08/1999 | 20/08/1998 |
| International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC<br>G06F1/00 | | |
| Applicant<br>COMODO TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT LIMITED et al. | | |

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

2. This REPORT consists of a total of 6 sheets, including this cover sheet.

   ☐ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

   These annexes consist of a total of sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

   - I ☒ Basis of the report
   - II ☐ Priority
   - III ☐ Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
   - IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention
   - V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations suporting such statement
   - VI ☐ Certain documents cited
   - VII ☒ Certain defects in the international application
   - VIII ☐ Certain observations on the international application

| Date of submission of the demand | Date of completion of this report |
|---|---|
| 19/02/2000 | 01.12.2000 |
| Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:<br>European Patent Office<br>D-80298 Munich<br>Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d<br>Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465 | Authorized officer<br>Dixon-Hundertpfund K<br>Telephone No. +49 89 2399 2857 |

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# INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/GB99/02671

## I. Basis of the report

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of *(substitute sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).)*:
**Description, pages:**

1-21 as originally filed

**Claims, No.:**

1-25 as originally filed

**Drawings, sheets:**

1/11-11/11 as originally filed

2. With regard to the **language**, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages:
- ☐ the claims, Nos.:

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☐ the drawings, sheets:

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

   *(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)*

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

**V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

1. Statement

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Novelty (N) | Yes: | Claims | 1-25 (yes) |
| | No: | Claims | |
| Inventive step (IS) | Yes: | Claims | |
| | No: | Claims | 1-25 (no) |
| Industrial applicability (IA) | Yes: | Claims | 1-25 (yes) |
| | No: | Claims | |

2. Citations and explanations
   **see separate sheet**

**VII. Certain defects in the international application**

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:
**see separate sheet**

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V. Reasoned statement with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability

1. The subject-matter of Claims 1 and 17 does not involve an inventive step, and therefore does not satisfy the criterion set forth in Article 33(3) PCT.

2. Reference is made to the following documents:

D1: DE 195 49 014 C (SIEMENS AG) 20 February 1997 (1997-02-20)
D2: EP 0 649 080 A (SIEMENS NIXDORF INF SYST) 19 April 1995 (1995-04-19)
D3: US 4 882 752 A (LINDMAN RICHARD S ET AL) 21 November 1989 (1989-11-21)
D4: US 5 355 414 A (HALE ROBERT P ET AL) 11 October 1994 (1994-10-11)
D5: US 5 189 700 A (BLANDFORD ROBERT R) 23 February 1993 (1993-02-23)

3. Document D1, which is considered to represent the most relevant state of the art, discloses an electronic security device (see in particular column 5, lines 14-27) comprising means for receiving and outputting signals when in an authorised use state, means for determining whether a real time period has expired and, if so, seeking ("Abfrageinformation afi") an authorisation, means for verifying the authorisation ("korrekt verschlüsselte Antwortinformation ai" in D1) an means for configuring the device into an unauthorised use state in the event that a correct authorisation is not received in time and D1 also discloses corresponding method.

Therefore, the subject-matter of Claims 1 and 17 differs from the disclosure of D1 in that a real time clock is used to determine whether a predetermined time period has expired.
The use of a real time clock to determine the expiration of a predetermined time period is merely one of several straightforward possibilities from which the skilled person would select, in accordance with circumstances, without the exercise of inventive skill.
For the above reasons, the subject-matter of Claims 1 and 17 does not involve an inventive step, and therefore does not satisfy the criterion set forth in Article 33(3) PCT.

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4. Claims 2-16 and 18-25 do not appear to contain any additional features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, involve an inventive step because they are either known from the prior art D1 to D5 or they define features which are a matter of normal design procedure for the skilled person.

VII. Certain defects in the international application

1.1 D2 discloses a terminal comprising a security module which stores security information such as a cryptographic key. The security module is connected to a central data processor, wherein before a data transfer between the terminal and the data processor an authentication procedure has to take place, in which the security module sends an encrypted time period to the data processor. If the security module does not seek a further authentication after this time period has elapsed, the security information in the security module is deleted.
D3 teaches that one of several unauthorised access modes can be implemented when an unauthorized interactive terminal or security control processor (SCP) is identified and that the SCPs include means for mathematically operating on data by the mathematical function of selected corresponding indexed cipher locations so as to encipher data to be transmitted over the transmission path and to decipher data received over the data transmission path.
In, D4 a computer security device for preventing unauthorised access to a computer system automatically disables peripheral device access to the computer system after the peripheral input devices remain inactive for a predetermined period. In order to reenable peripheral device access, to the host computer, a user enters a correct password on the keyboard.
D5 discloses that an authentication code can be produced using a random number included in data.

1.2 Contrary to the requirements of Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT, the relevant background art disclosed in the documents D1 to D5 is not mentioned in the description, nor are these documents identified therein.

2. The features of the claims are not provided with reference signs placed in parentheses (Rule 6.2(b) PCT).

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3. The claims have not been drafted in the two-part form as required by Rule 6.3(b) PCT.

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PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

# PCT

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

| Applicant's or agent's file reference | FOR FURTHER ACTION | see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below. |
|---|---|---|
| PLB/CC/Q418 | | |
| International application No. | International filing date *(day/month/year)* | (Earliest) Priority Date *(day/month/year)* |
| PCT/GB 99/ 02671 | 12/08/1999 | 20/08/1998 |
| Applicant | | |
| COMODO TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT LIMITED et al. | | |

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 3 sheets.

[X] It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

1. **Basis of the report**

   a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

   [ ] the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).

   b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing :

   [ ] contained in the international application in written form.

   [ ] filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

   [ ] furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

   [ ] furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readble form.

   [ ] the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

   [ ] the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

2. [ ] **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).

3. [ ] **Unity of invention is lacking** (see Box II).

4. With regard to the **title**,

   [X] the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

   [ ] the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

5. With regard to the **abstract**,

   [X] the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

   [ ] the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the **drawings** to be published with the abstract is Figure No. 1

   [X] as suggested by the applicant.

   [ ] None of the figures.

   [ ] because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

   [ ] because this figure better characterizes the invention.

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/GB 99/02671

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**
IPC 7 G06F1/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 G06F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

| Category ° | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|---|---|---|
| X | DE 195 49 014 C (SIEMENS AG)<br>20 February 1997 (1997-02-20)<br><br>abstract; figure 1<br>claims 1-10 | 1-3,13,<br>14,<br>17-19,26 |
| A | | 9,12 |
| A | EP 0 649 080 A (SIEMENS NIXDORF INF SYST)<br>19 April 1995 (1995-04-19)<br><br>the whole document | 1-3,5-7,<br>11-14,<br>16-19,<br>21-23,<br>25,26 |

-/--

[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

[X] Patent family members are listed in annex.

° Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

| Date of the actual completion of the international search | Date of mailing of the international search report |
|---|---|
| 29 November 1999 | 06/12/1999 |

| Name and mailing address of the ISA | Authorized officer |
|---|---|
| European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2<br>NL – 2280 HV Rijswijk<br>Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,<br>Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016 | Powell, D |

1

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1992)

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category ° | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|---|---|---|
| A | US 4 882 752 A (LINDMAN RICHARD S ET AL)<br>21 November 1989 (1989-11-21)<br><br>abstract; figures 1,2,5<br>column 1, line 1 -column 7, line 31 | 1-3,5-7,<br>11-14,<br>16-19,<br>21-23,<br>25,26 |
| A | US 5 355 414 A (HALE ROBERT P ET AL)<br>11 October 1994 (1994-10-11) | |
| A | US 5 189 700 A (BLANDFORD ROBERT R)<br>23 February 1993 (1993-02-23) | |

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No
PCT/GB 99/02671

| Patent document cited in search report | Publication date | Patent family member(s) | Publication date |
|---|---|---|---|
| DE 19549014 C | 20-02-1997 | CN 1158523 A | 03-09-1997 |
| | | EP 0782350 A | 02-07-1997 |
| | | US 5864624 A | 26-01-1999 |
| EP 0649080 A | 19-04-1995 | NONE | |
| US 4882752 A | 21-11-1989 | NONE | |
| US 5355414 A | 11-10-1994 | NONE | |
| US 5189700 A | 23-02-1993 | US 5347579 A | 13-09-1994 |
| | | WO 9212485 A | 23-07-1992 |

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